

Submission from Mr Masataka Tarahara, Consulate General of Japan

The Consulate General of Japan would like to submit views on the Scottish Government report **Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+ 2 Approach**.

Specifically, our views relate to the following points:

- The choice of languages for teaching
- The role of languages in economic development

The Choice of Languages for Teaching

Language education is one of the important tools for nurturing in children intercultural understanding and respect for other countries. We agree that primary schools are an ideal environment for children to begin language education, so they can learn to enjoy and appreciate languages and cultures from an early age. We also agree that it is best not to restrict schools at all in their choice of languages at this level; in Scotland, where so many schools enjoy rich linguistic and cultural diversity it is important to allow schools to teach to their strengths and make use of their existing teachers' language abilities.

With the following views, we believe that the Japanese language should be one of many languages available to primary school children in Scotland.

1. Scotland and Japan have a long history of solid relations in economic and cultural spheres. By studying the Japanese language, Scottish children have the opportunity to explore these links between Scotland and Japan and also gain insight into Japan's unique culture and society. With a view to maintaining and strengthening the close relations between Scotland and Japan, the Japanese language should be one of the foreign languages taught in primary schools in Scotland.

2. Japan is the world's third-largest economy and many Japanese companies have invested heavily and are operating on a large scale in the UK.

- Japan's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) reached \$5.5 trillion in 2010.
- The UK invested ¥1.23 trillion in Japan (the third largest figure in the EU) in 2010).
- Japan invested ¥3.78 trillion in the UK (the second largest investment destination in the EU) in 2010.

Considering the size of Japan's economy, Japanese must surely be a highly useful business language for Scottish children. In addition, many regions (in the UK) in which Japanese companies are located have strong links with Japan. In these regions, pupils, their families and teachers have a strong interest in Japan, and knowledge of Japanese could have substantial vocational value for young people there.

3. Over the years, Japan has been one of the most influential countries in the world as well as one of the major contributors in addressing key global issues, along with the UK. This has led to the opening up of broad horizons for Japan-UK cooperation in a wide range of fields, providing yet more reasons for pupils to study Japanese for their future careers.

- Japan and the UK are both members of the G8, which has played a central role in dealing with the most pressing issues around the world for nearly four decades. The UK will assume the presidency this year. Japan is the only participant from Asia.
- Like the UK, Japan is actively extending assistance to developing countries so that they can embark on their own paths to peace and prosperity. The amount of official development assistance disbursed by Japan reached the top of the global rankings in 1993 and remained so until 2000, and Japan has been among the top five donors ever since. Furthermore, Japan has been actively participating in UN peace-keeping operations and has dispatched more than 9,000 personnel on 27 missions.
- Japan is at the forefront of science and technology: it was second in the category of science infrastructure in the 2012 World Competitiveness Rankings (IMD). Researchers from Japan have won 16 Nobel Prizes in the fields of physics, chemistry and physiology/medicine. (In 2012 the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine was awarded to Professor Shinya Yamanaka of Japan and Sir John B. Gurdon of the UK.)
- Japanese culture, including literature, the arts, martial arts, fashion, food, games, comics and anime, appeals to people all over the world. Japan was ranked sixth in the third annual Soft Power Survey conducted in 2012 by the UK magazine *Monocle* (the December 2012 edition).
- Japan's positive and proactive role in all the key fields above has been widely recognised within the UK. For instance, the 2012 BBC global poll ranked Japan as "the world's most positively viewed" foreign country. Also, *Guardian* readers voted Japan "the top long-haul destination" in the Readers' Travel Awards 2012.

4. In addition, it should be added that there are a substantial number of people who are using or learning Japanese around the world. Japan has the world's tenth-largest population, with over 127 million people. In addition, both the number of non-Japanese people learning and the number of Japanese language teachers have been steadily increasing for the last 30 years. The number of people learning Japanese has become 30 times bigger than what it was at the end of the 1970s, at more than 3.6 million. The number of teachers has become 12 times bigger during the same period, at about 50,000. These data support the notion that Japanese is one of the languages which constitute critical tools for communication in the world.

5. There are substantial numbers of students who are learning Japanese in UK schools. At primary education level 776 pupils, at secondary education level 6,780 pupils, at higher education level 5,656 students were studying Japanese in 2009 (according to the 2009 Overseas Japanese-Language Education Organization Survey conducted by the Japan Foundation). In addition, the number of pupils learning Japanese has steadily increased in recent years. For those who want to continue learning Japanese, schools should be able to choose Japanese as one of the foreign languages taught.

6. There is a substantial base of Japanese-speaking graduates who are able to teach the Japanese language within Scotland: The government-run Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme has been sending Scottish graduates to Japan to teach in Japanese Schools since 1987. Now, 26 years since the start of the programme, there are currently 365 ex-JET participants registered with the official JET Alumni Association in Scotland, including many who have become teachers. These people would be an excellent source of Japanese teachers at primary level.

The Role of Languages in Economic Development

In addition to the views described above, with the following views, we believe that learning a foreign language, more specifically the Japanese language, can play a key role in the flourishing of the Scottish economy.

1. According to the SDI there are at least 65 Japanese-owned companies operating in Scotland, employing over 5,000 people in fields as diverse as electronics, renewable energy, and the medical sector. Recent Japanese inward investment includes:

- 2010 - Mitsubishi Power Systems Europe invested in the creation of a wind turbine research and manufacture centre in the Edinburgh area with the aim of creating 200 jobs by 2015. The company also acquired Artemis Intelligent Power in Midlothian.
- 2012 - Mitsui bought 25% of the Aberdeen-based Global Energy Group. At that time a Mitsui representative stated - "Mitsui believe that Scotland has a bright future for further development of its energy resources".

www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/04/Mitsuiglobal16042012

2. Japan has consistently been in the top twenty export markets for Scottish companies. The latest export figures by the Scottish government show that Scotland exports to Japan in 2011 totaled at £365 million. (Global Connections Survey:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/Exports/GCSIntroduction/GCS2011tables)

3. The Scottish Government has already recognised the importance of the Japanese market and the relationship between Scotland and Japan. For example:

- Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney visited Japan in 2012 and 2009. In his summary of his 2009 visit, he stated - "I have, I hope, helped to strengthen and deepen our two countries' blossoming relationship".

www.scotland.gov.uk/News/This-Week/Ministers-In-The-Media/090726000000

- Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, led a food and drink delegation to Japan in 2012. Speaking ahead of the visit, he said - "the food and drinks sector is one of our greatest assets and this trade visit provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase the very best of Scottish produce in two key growth markets"

www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/11/asiafood07112012

Conclusion

The Consulate General of Japan takes the view that the **1+2 Approach** could present an option for Scottish children to learn Japanese language and increase their understanding

of Japanese culture and society. It can make the close relations between Scotland and Japan stronger in the future.

Furthermore, having increased numbers of Japanese language learners in Scotland can only help to expand the good economic ties that currently exist between the two countries. The ability of Scots to speak some level of Japanese would be a clear sign to Japanese investors that Scotland understands and respects their country.

Japanese language is an invaluable tool that Scotland can utilise to ensure its global competitiveness, and enhance the good relations between Scotland and Japan.